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Chain of Lakes

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Thompson Chain of Lakes
Site Specific Environmental Assessment

The Thompson Chain of Lakes

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Thompson Chain of Lakes
Site Specific Environmental Assessment

Why an EA?

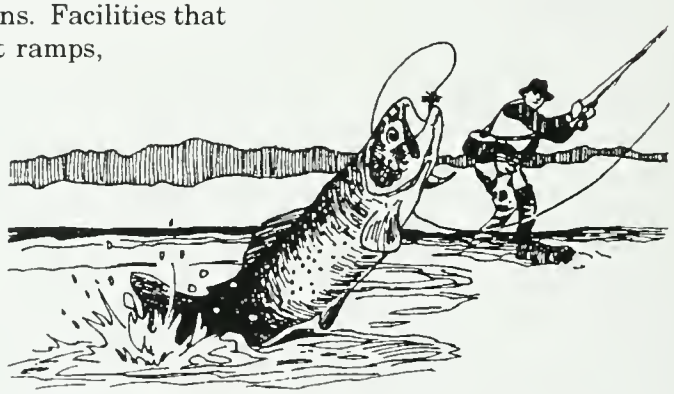
In November of 1993, after an extended public comment period, a Management Plan and Environmental Assessment was completed for Thompson Chain of Lakes.

In that document the following management direction evolved:

1. The TCL property will be managed as a Fishing Access Site, with traditional dispersed recreational use, and management and development consistent with FWP's fishing access program.

2. Within legal constraints imposed by federal or state statute, dispersed sites or existing roads traditionally used would not be closed unless unacceptable resource, safety, or recreational conflicts were documented and not until the Montana Environmental Policy act procedures have been followed. Conversely, no new sites or road would be developed. Baseline for the existing condition was selected as fall of 1991, when the property began to be managed by the State of Montana. Protection of resources such as wildlife, fisheries, vegetation, historic and archeological sites, and water will be given priority.

3. An inventory and site specific plans for TCL would be completed and public comment sought on those plans. Facilities that could be considered would include boat ramps, toilets, fences, road repair, parking, access for the disabled, fire rings, and signs, and redesign of sites or a combination of sites to protect the resource and improve public recreational use.



In November of 1991 an inventory of existing recreational sites was completed, in September of 1993, the area was again inventoried. Sites created after 1991 were identified and inventoried. After adoption of the Management Plan and Environmental Assessment, the Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks, a private consultant, and a group of individuals representing various interests in the TCL formed a recreation subcommittee to the TCL Oversight Committee.

Using the Limits of Acceptable Change process, they formulated specific recommendations. The Limits of Acceptable Change format was used as this process manages for observed changes on the ground, and provides action alternatives for these visible changes. Hence, management is directed toward leaving conditions as "they currently exist", or combining or expanding some sites to better suit recreational needs, a primary goal in the TCL Management Plan. Through this process, possible responses to impacts are discussed prior to the need for implementation so agreement can be reached as to which actions are appropriate for the area impacted.

This LAC management plan includes a complete management work plan, containing a development scale as to types and purposes of facilities to be considered in development, classification of all lands in the TCL area into four Recreational Opportunity Classes, the formulation of a monitoring system to track impacts that occur over time, and the adoption of an action plan to be followed when impacts occurred. Finally, this plan makes site specific recommendations for capacity of a site, and development levels for sites which are to be implemented now or in the future.

This executive summary will cover all site specific recommendations in the TCL area. In order to reduce printing costs ($12.00 per copy for the complete Environmental Assessment), so monies can be spent on physical improvements, it was decided to provide this executive summary to all interested parties. The complete Environmental Assessment and Thompson Chain of Lakes Inventory and Guidelines for Recreational Planning may be checked out at your local library, Chamber of Commerce, or with your representative on the TCL Oversight Committee. If you would like a copy for your files, please send $12.00 to TCL, Fish, Wildlife and Parks, 490 N. Meridian, Kalispell, MT 59901. To view the individual site inventory maps, come to the FWP office located at 490 North Meridian, Kalispell, MT 59901.

Alternatives Analyzed

Three options are presented in the site specific recommendations. These options are based on the recommendations in the TCL Master Plan. As there are a wide range of options available for each site, it was decided to present three master options. The final option selected will undoubtedly be a combination of those options presented, with individual sites selecting either Option I, II, or III.

In the accompanying charts, the number of camper units that the site can accommodate is listed. The number of camper units for each site was determined based on area size, bare ground area, observed use, and user made improvements. A camper unit is defined as a motorized vehicle, motorhome, camping bus, pull-type camper, tent, or any device designed for sleeping, including a combination of any two that are used by parents and their unmarried children. When use of a site begins to routinely exceed listed capacity, a "trigger" is tripped which requires reinventory of the site. If expansion or further resource degradation is documented, a variety of management alternatives to reduce impacts will be considered.

Option I: **No Action:** This alternative must be presented as a baseline in environmental assessment in order to compare this alternative's impacts to other proposed alternatives. It was previously determined in the 1993 Management Plan that TCL wide, this was not an acceptable alternative. However, the decisions for an individual site could be the no action alternative, in that no improvements would be done at this site.

Option II: **5 Site Option:** This management option follows the recommendation in the TCL Management Plan, i.e., the camping resource is designed to retain dispersed opportunities for recreational vehicle users. Campsite upgrades will take place at Loon Lake, the peninsula between Middle and Lower Thompson

Lakes, the bridge at Upper Thompson, Horseshoe Lake, and the east end of McGregor Lake. Toilets and signing will be provided at other locations. In the future facilities changes could include barriers, road repair, fire grills, and/or picnic tables. A set carrying capacity is established, and management options established for when these capacities are exceeded.

Option III: **Diverse Opportunity:** This option provides a more diverse spectrum of recreation management opportunities than Option II. Besides development of the facilities listed in Option II, some sites would be closed, other sites restricted to boat-in or walk-in access. A set carrying capacity is established, and management options established for when these capacities are exceeded.

On the following pages you will find maps of the TCL area, with each site carrying an identification number. Following those maps is a chart with the following information:

1. Site number
2. Camper Unit Number (The number of camper units a site can accommodate)
3. Recommendations in Options II and III. As Option I is the no action alternative it is not listed as this listing would simply state leave open, no development, no control. At the top of the chart is a list of management activities that would pertain to all sites located on TCL land.

How Can You Participate?

FWP and the TCL Oversight Committee will be holding public meetings regarding this EA. The meetings will consist of the first hour an open house to answer individual questions and take individual comments, and a second hour to make a brief presentation of the recommendations and take additional comments.

The meetings will be as follows:

Thursday, June 1, 1995, 7-9 p.m. at the Fish, Wildlife and Parks Regional Headquarters, Kalispell

Saturday, June 10, 1995, 2-4 p.m. at Happy's Inn, 39704 Highway 2 South, Libby

Thursday, June 15, 1995, 7-9 p.m. at the Asa Wood Gym, 700 Idaho Avenue, Libby

Written comments can be sent to TCL, Fish, Wildlife and Parks, 490 N. Meridian, Kalispell, MT 59901.

TCL SITE SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATIONS

The following management actions will take place at all sites under all options:

- Enforcement of all regulations pertinent to the FWP Fishing Access Program
- Pack-in-Pack-out requirements for refuse
- Prohibition of expansion of sites unless specifically recommended below
- Restoration of areas no longer in use. For example restoration of user made boat ramps as standard boat ramps and parking are made available.
- Limit number of camper units per site to the number listed below when environmental damage or expansion of site is occurring, unless specifically listed otherwise
- Users may be contacted by FWP personnel
- Fire rings may be installed where it is deemed necessary
- Upon approval, picnic tables may be installed by volunteer groups
- Length of stay is 14 days

Lake Name Site #	Number of Camper Units	Option II	Option III
McGregor			
1	4	Improve Access, close boat ramp to reduce erosion into the lake. Provide vault toilet*.	Improve Access, close boat ramp to reduce erosion into the lake. Provide vault toilet*.
1A	1		
1B	2	Provide vault toilet*.	Provide vault toilet*.
2	4	Provide vault toilet*	Provide vault toilet*
3	1	Provide boat ramp and parking. Make day use if use requires. Provide vault toilet.	Provide boat ramp and parking. Make day use if use requires. Provide vault toilet.
3A	1	Provide vault toilet*	Provide vault toilet*. Close road that extends beyond site to reduce resource damage and control erosion.

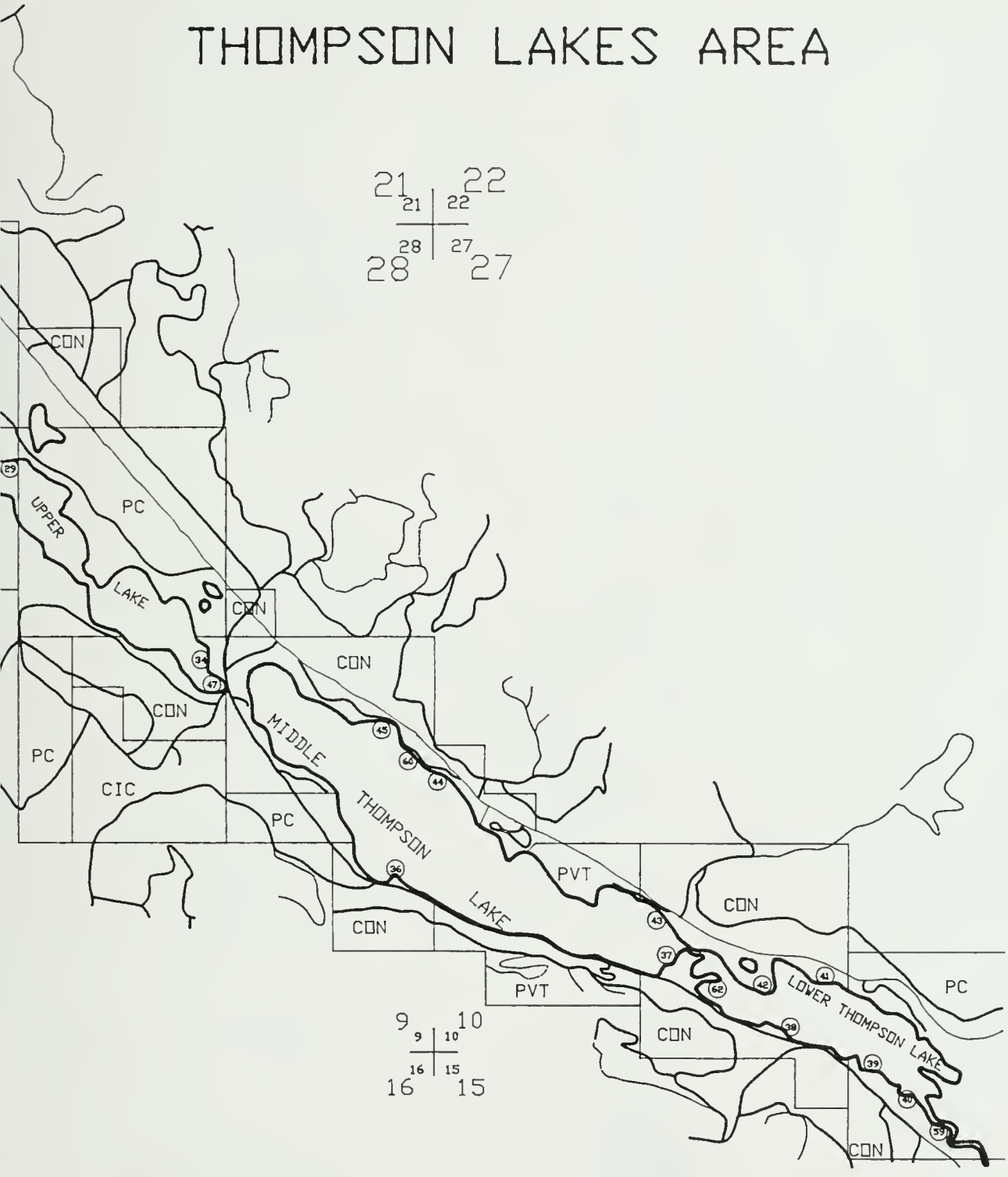
Lake Name Site #	Number of Camper Units	Option II	Option III
5	1		Eliminate site to reduce erosion due to vehicles traveling on a steep road in close proximity to lakeshore.
6	2		Eliminate site to reduce erosion due to vehicles traveling on a steep road in close proximity to lakeshore.
8	2		
Little McGregor			
46	3	Acquire public access.	Acquire public access, and improve access to site. Provide vault toilet* Consider handicapped accessibility in the future.
66	1		Close site to avoid surface water runoff into the lake, soil compaction, and vegetation removal.
67	2		Close site to avoid surface water runoff into the lake, soil compaction, and vegetation removal.
Lower Thompson			

Lake Name Site #	Number of Camper Units	Option II	Option III
38	4	Provide vault toilet*.	Redesign 38, 38A and 38B into one site. Provide vault toilet*. Construct boat ramp when use requires this action. Close existing boat ramp to reduce surface runoff into the lake.
38A	3	Provide vault toilet*.	Combine with site 38.
38B	1	Provide vault toilet*.	Combine with site 38. Provide vault toilet*. Close road to reduce erosion. Make site walk in or boat in via a foot bridge from site 38.
39	2		Close boat ramp to reduce erosion due to steep gradient. Provide stock facilities in future if need exists.
40	2		Provide vault toilet*.
40A	1		Provide vault toilet*.
40B	1		
40C	1		
41	4	**	** Eliminate boat ramp to reduce runoff into the lake.
41A	1	** Provide vault toilet*.	** Provide vault toilet*.

Lake Name Site #	Number of Camper Units	Option II	Option III
41B	1	** Provide vault toilet.	** Provide vault toilet. Eliminate boat ramp to reduce runoff into the lake.
41C	1	**	**
42	12	Construct boat ramp and parking, eliminate other ramps. Provide handicapped accessible vault toilet. Provide volunteer host pad which would include water, sewer, and electricity. Close RV trail through marsh.	Construct boat ramp and parking, eliminate other ramps. Provide handicapped accessible vault toilet. Provide volunteer host pad which would include water, sewer, and electricity. Close RV trail through marsh.
59	1		Institute seasonal closure (April 1 - May 15) to protect goose nesting. Provide better public access in the future.
62	Day Use Only	Day Use Only	Eliminate vehicle access due to excessive erosion due to steep road into site. Provide boat in or walk in camping and day use.
Middle Thompson			
36	4		Provide vault toilet*.

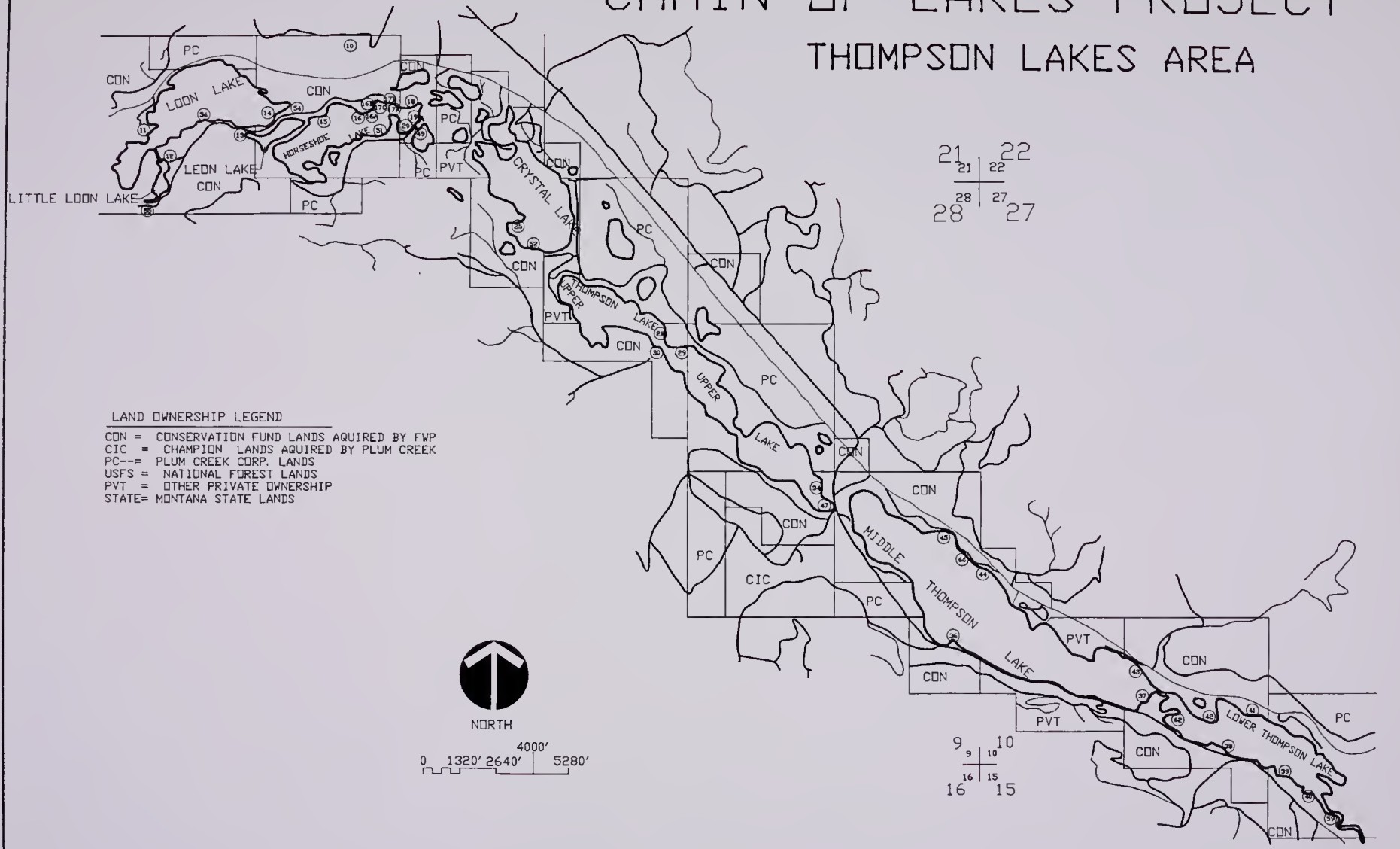
AIN OF LAKES PROJECT

THOMPSON LAKES AREA



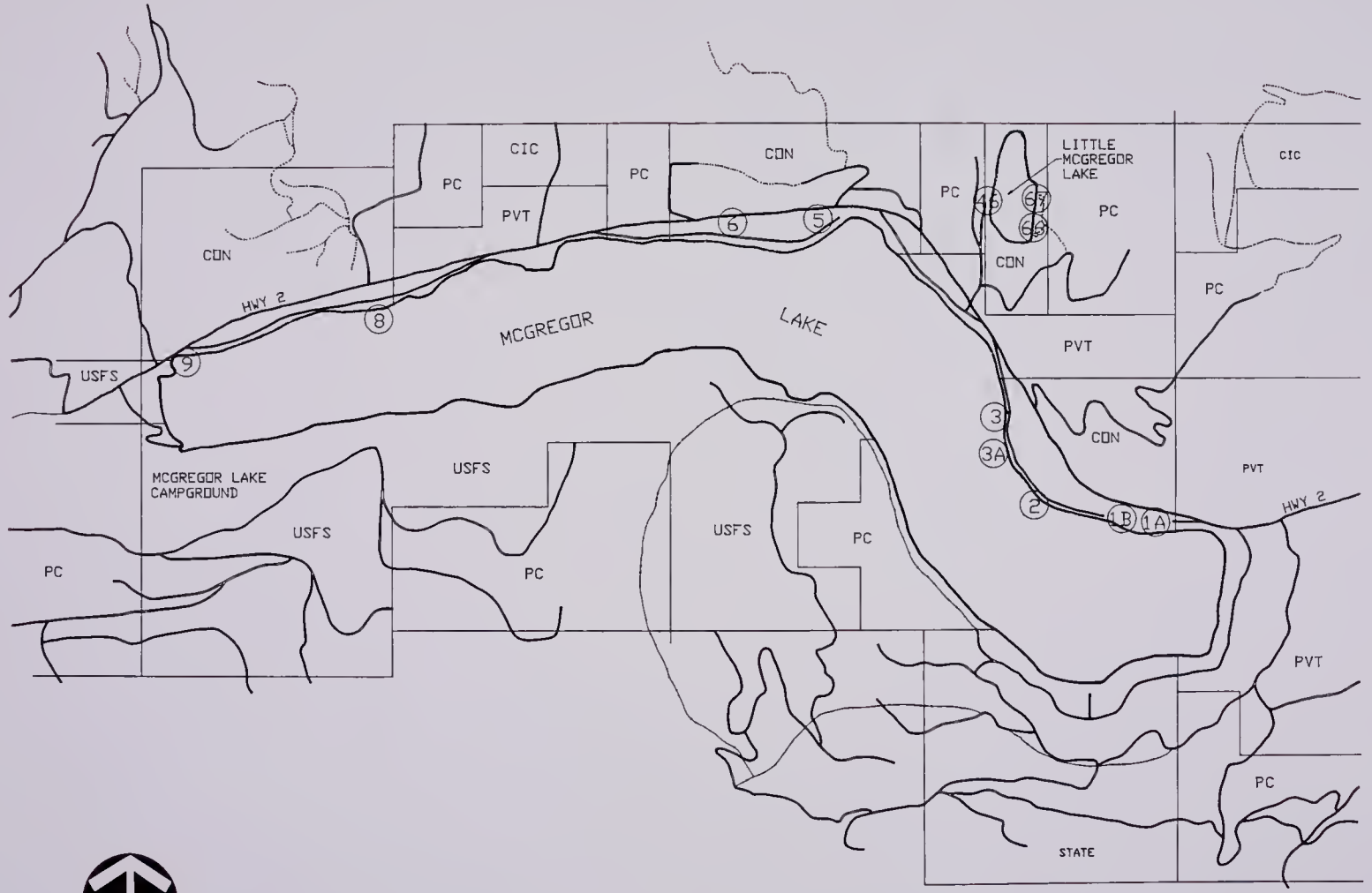
CHAIN OF LAKES PROJECT

THOMPSON LAKES AREA



LAND OWNERSHIP LEGEND

CON = CONSERVATION FUND LANDS AQUIRED BY FWP
CIC = CHAMPION LANDS AQUIRED BY PLUM CREEK
PC--= PLUM CREEK CORP. LANDS
USFS = NATIONAL FOREST LANDS
PVT = OTHER PRIVATE OWNERSHIP
STATE= MONTANA STATE LANDS



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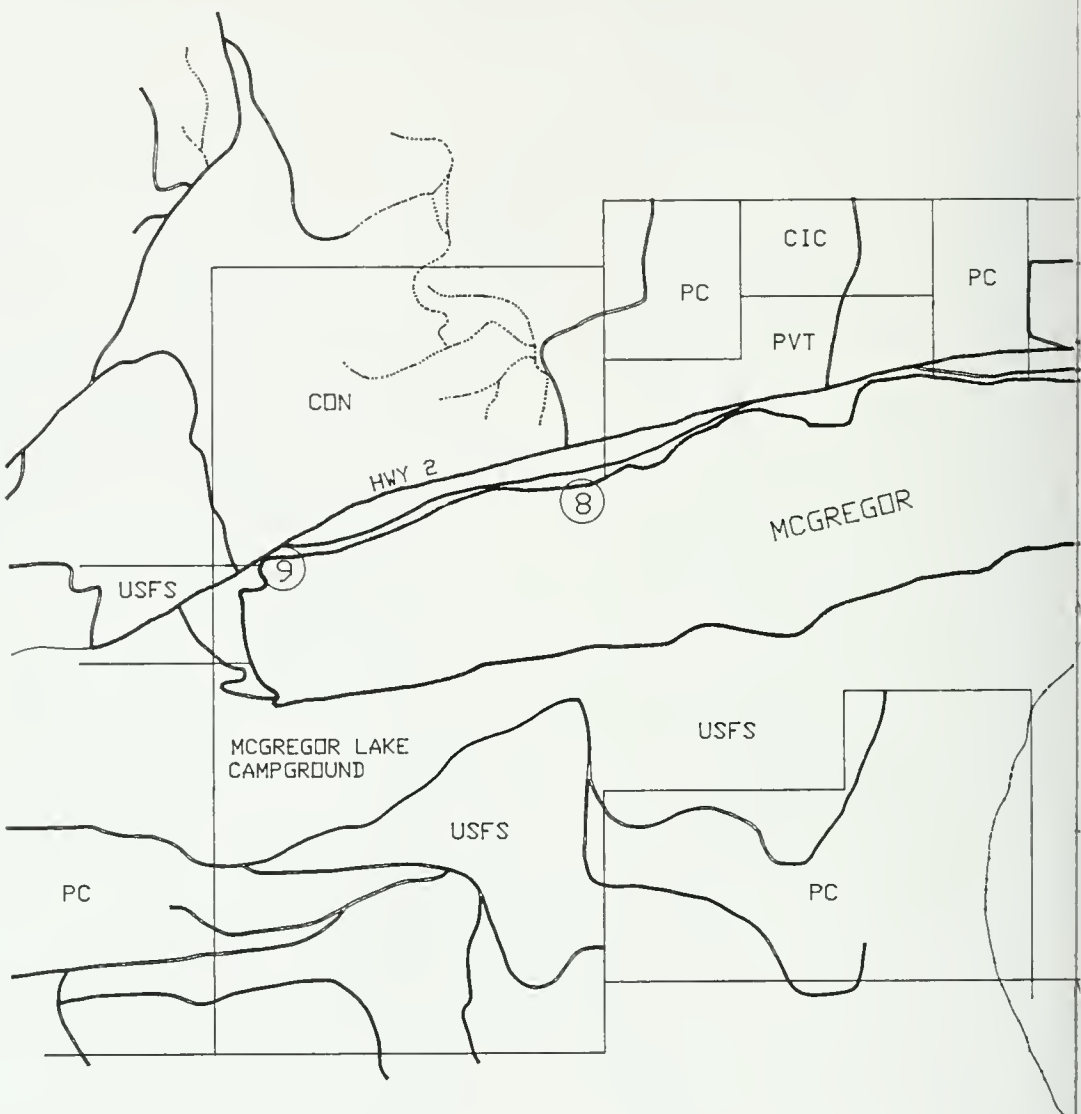

NORTH

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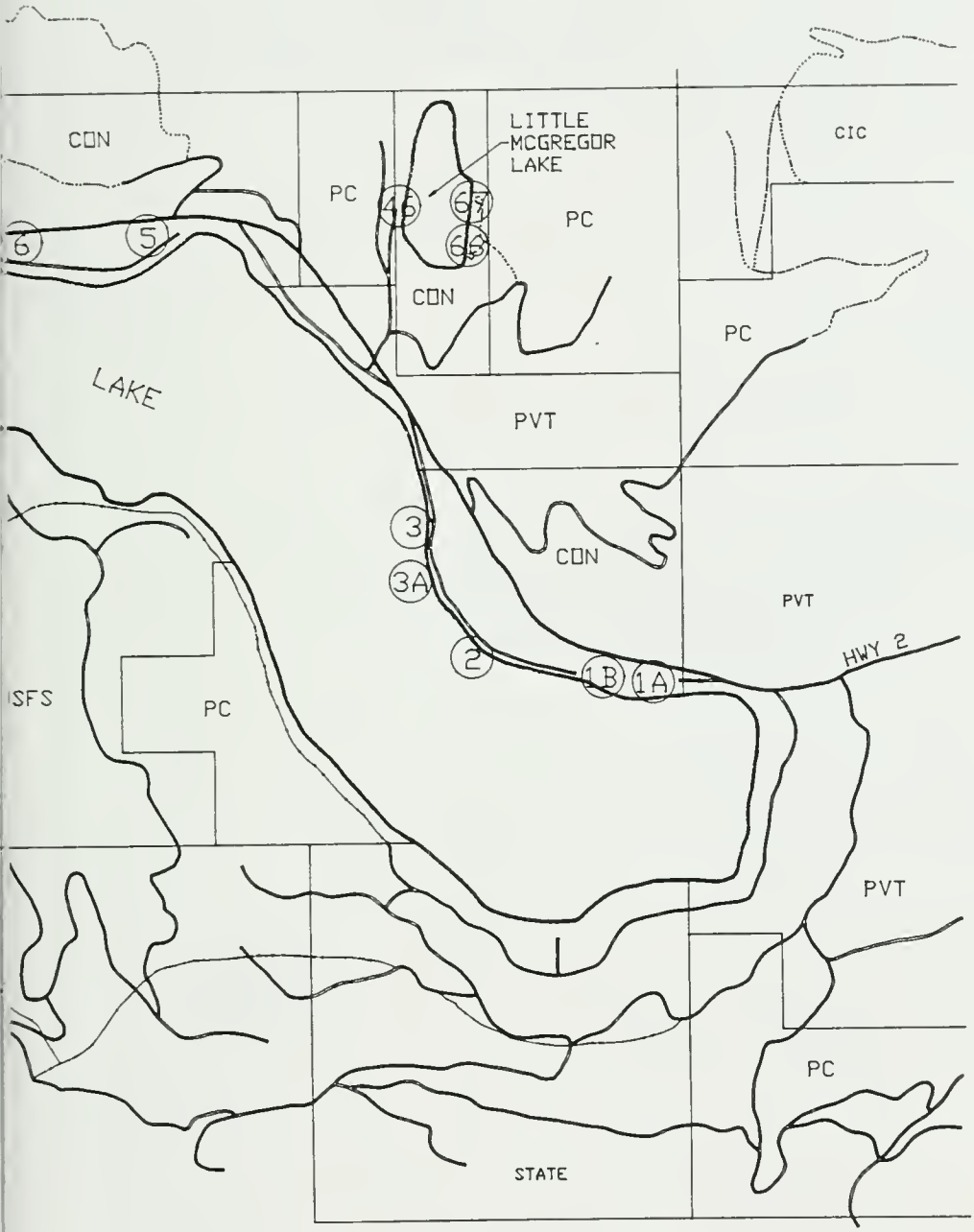

LAND OWNERSHIP LEGEND

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C = PLUM CREEK CORP. LANDS
= PLUM CREEK CORP. LANDS
FS = NATIONAL FOREST LANDS
= OTHER PRIVATE OWNERSHIP
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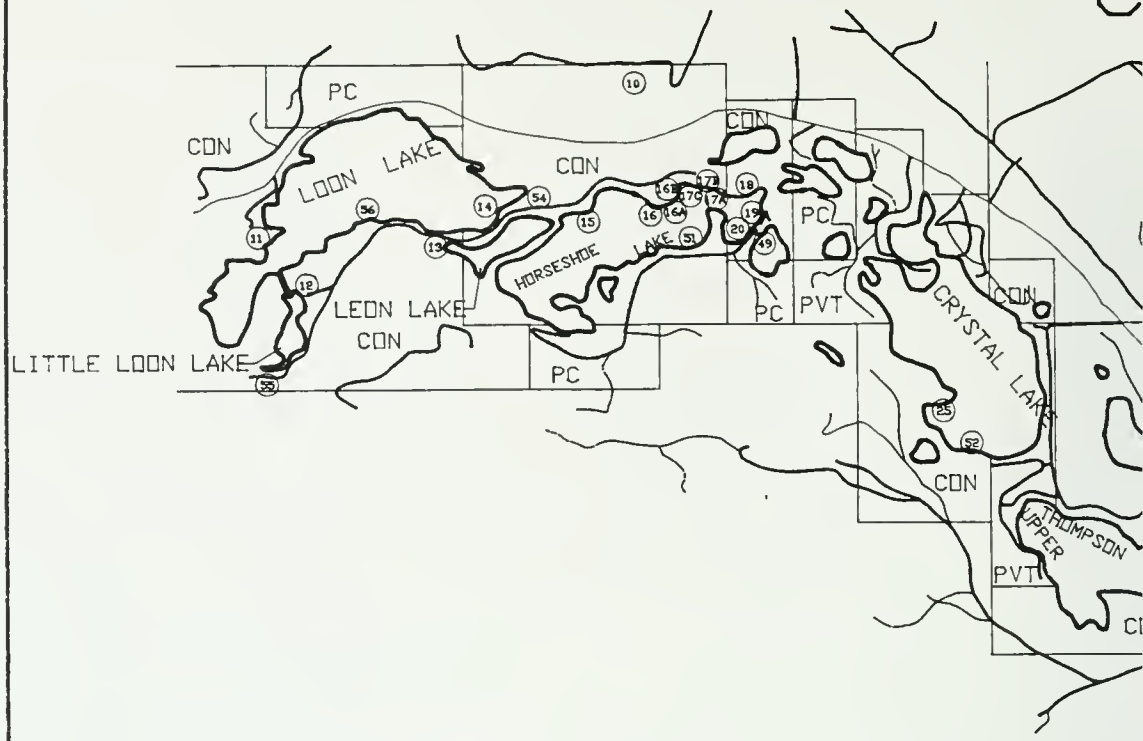

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NORTH

0 1320' 2640' 4000' 5280'

Lake Name Site #	Number of Camper Units	Option II	Option III
37	1		Eliminate vehicle access due vegetative damage. Make boat in or hike in access.
37A	Day Use Only		Close site due to vegetative damage. This is a new site since 1991, and to keep commitment to no expansion of sites, should be closed.
43	10	Provide vault toilet*.	Provide vault toilet. Close RV trail
44	2		Provide vault toilet*.
45	1	Provide vault toilet.	Provide vault toilet. Make site day use only to accommodate boat trailer parking, picnickers, and to reduce soil compaction and erosion.
60	1		Make site day use only to accommodate picnickers, and boat trailer parking.
64	6	Provide vault toilet*.	Provide vault toilet*.

Lake Name Site #	Number of Camper Units	Option II	Option III
Logan State Park	39	Redesign site, provide handicapped accessibility, expand site, provide facilities such as mooring dock.	Redesign site, provide handicapped accessibility, expand site, provide facilities such as mooring dock.
Upper Thompson			
28	3	Provide vault toilet. Eliminate boat ramp. Expand site in future as capacity needs increase.	Provide vault toilet. Eliminate boat ramp. Expand site in future as capacity needs increase.
29	3	Construct boat ramp, provide vault toilet. Make day use only if use requires.	Construct boat ramp, provide vault toilet. Make day use only if use requires.
30	1		
32	4	Provide vault toilet.	Provide vault toilet. In future, provide boat launch, improve access.
34	2		Provide vault toilet*.
35	1		
47	Day Use Only	Day Use Only	Close site, as it is a private dock on state property.
63	3		Close site as this is a new site. Development on other side of road should accommodate users.
Crystal			

Lake Name Site #	Number of Camper Units	Option II	Option III
25	1		Close site due to wildlife and environmental concerns.
52	1		Close site due to wildlife and environmental concerns.
New	3	Leave sites 25 and 52 open, do not develop new site on highway side of lake.	Create a new 3 camper unit site with vault toilet on state property on the highway side of the lake to provide public recreation on lake.
Horseshoe			
15	2		Close and rehabilitate site due to steep terrain and serious erosion problems.
16	5	Close boat ramp.	Redesign and combine site with sites 16A and 16B. Close boat ramp.
16A	4	Construct boat ramp and install vault toilet. Provide boat launch parking area. Make day use if use requires. Install volunteer host pad.	Combine with sites 16 and 16B. Construct boat ramp and install vault toilet. Provide boat launch parking area. Make day use if use requires. Install volunteer host pad.
16B	1		Combine with sites 16 and 16A.

Lake Name Site #	Number of Camper Units	Option II	Option III
17	6	Eliminate existing boat ramp to reduce erosion and due to proximity of improved ramp at site 16.	Provide vault toilet*. Eliminate existing boat ramp to reduce erosion into the lake, and due to proximity of improved ramp at site 16.
17A	1		Provide vault toilet.
17B	1		
17C	1		
18	3	Close existing boat ramp due to erosion.	Close existing boat ramp due to erosion and proximity of improved ramp at site 16. Provide vault toilet*.
19	2		
20	1		Provide vault toilet.
51	2		Close site due to vegetative damage. Also site was created in 1991 and should be eliminated to keep with philosophy of no increase in number of sites.
Cibid			
49	1		Make site day use only to reduce erosion, and provide parking for vehicles.
Banana			

Lake Name Site #	Number of Camper Units	Option II	Option III
10	1		Make site day use only to reduce vegetative loss, and to provide parking.
Loon			
11	6	Construct new boat ramp and boat ramp parking to east of existing site. Make this area day use if use requires. Barricade existing ramp. provide handicapped accessible vault toilet. Signing.	Construct new boat ramp and boat ramp parking to east of existing site. Make immediate area around new ramp day use if use requires. Barricade existing ramp. provide handicapped accessible vault toilet. Signing.
14	3		Provide vault toilet*.
53	1		Close site due to vegetative damage in wetland area, and since this is a new site since 1991. Believe it is an overflow site.
56	1		
Little Loon			
12	4		Provide vault toilet.
55	1		Close to prevent vegetative damage. This is a new site since 1991.
Leon			
13	3		Provide vault toilet.

Lake Name Site #	Number of Camper Units	Option II	Option III
54	1		Close site to prevent vegetative damage. This is a new site since 1991.

* This boat ramp is not in the current round of funding, but will be provided as funding is made available in the future.

** Relocation of Highway #2 will probably eliminate these sites.

COMMENTS ON
TCL EA AND INVENTORY
AND GUIDELINES FOR RECREATIONAL PLANNING

GENERAL COMMENTS

I prefer

___ Option I

___ Option II

___ Option III

In general, I like:

In general, I dislike:

SITE SPECIFIC COMMENTS

Site Number: _____

I Prefer:

___ Option I

___ Option II

___ Option III

Comments on Site:

Site Number: _____

I Prefer:

___ Option I

___ Option II

___ Option III

Comments on Site:

Name: _____

Address: _____

_____

Phone: _____

Cut or tear this page, fill out your preferences and comments, and mail or deliver to the address on the back side.

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